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United States
Department of
Agriculture
Food and
Consumer Service

The Friday Letter

S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
NATIONAL FOOD AND CONSUMER SERVICE

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SEP 14 '83

USDA Bills Six States for High Food Stamp Error Rates

USDA will bill six States for more than \$8 million for food stamp error rates above an acceptable level, Assistant Secretary Mary C. Jarratt said in a press release on July 5.

The States to be billed are Arizona, Alaska, Colorado, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Florida. These States, along with five other States and Guam, were notified last November that their error rates for the reporting period April-September 1981, were above the national error rate of 12.6 percent, or their individual goal for that period.

States are required by law to bring their food stamp error rates in line with the national average or, in some cases, to make substantial progress toward reaching the national average. Under the law, States can get enhanced administrative funding based on their error rate performance.

New Income Limits Take Effect

Assistant Secretary Mary C. Jarratt said that under the new guidelines a family of four who use food stamps can have a gross income of \$1,073 a month and still be eligible for assistance. Previously, the monthly income limit was \$1,008.

The income limit for free school meals will go from \$12,090 to \$12,870 annually for a family of four. The limit for reduced-price meals will go from \$17,210 to \$18,315.

A family of four may receive up to \$18,315 and still take part in the WIC Program. Previously, the income limit was \$17,210.

Congress requires USDA to update the eligibility guidelines each July 1, reflecting changes in the consumer price index.

Food Stamp Funding

On Thursday, the Department notified all States to prepare for a potential deficiency in food stamp funding beginning in August as required by law. However, Secretary Block cautioned against alarm since he believes Congress will take action on a 6-month-old supplemental funding request for the program in sufficient time to continue paying benefits.

In January, the Department requested \$1.2 billion in supplemental funding after re-evaluating program participation projections for the current fiscal year. Congress has not yet passed supplemental funds for food stamps. Therefore, Block said USDA is still legally bound to issue the notifications to States in the event that Congress does not appropriate added funds.

"This is a situation which the Congress certainly needs to address quickly," Block said. "It is important that 22 million food stamp recipients are not alarmed needlessly. We were required by law to make this notification to the States."

About \$260 million is needed to fully fund food stamp benefits for August. The remainder is needed for September to fully fund food stamps for the current fiscal year. The additional funding will bring food stamp spending to \$12 billion for this fiscal year.

Special Nutrition

Supplemental Food Programs

WIC Proposed Regulations: A proposed amendment to WIC Regulations will be published in today's Federal Register. The primary purpose of this proposal is to reduce State and local agency burdens and to broaden the scope of State agency administrative discretion.

This rule proposes all areas of the WIC Regulations except sections governing food delivery systems, the food package, and State Plan clearance procedures. In addition to a number of major changes, the Department proposes a reorganization of the regulations and some editorial clarifications.

Comments on the proposal are encouraged and will receive careful consideration in the process of developing final regulations. All comments must reach Supplemental Food Programs Division by September 6.

Family Nutrition

Program Accountability

Retailer Food Stamp Publications Currently Out-of-Stock: PA-1221, The Guide for Retailers, and PA-1176, Cashier Training Manual, are currently out of stock. The Guide for Retailers is being revised and reprinted this fiscal year. Field and Regional Offices should not submit orders for the publications until their availability is announced in a future Friday Letter. Copies of PA-1221S, the Spanish edition of The Guide for Retailers, are currently available.

Washington Area News

Leadership Effectiveness Training: Fourteen Food and Nutrition Service employees completed a session of Leadership Effectiveness Training at Park Office Center last week. Since Leadership Effectiveness was first offered in March 1983, 61 employees have taken the course. The Human Resources Development Branch, Personnel Division, will offer the course again this fall.

In other training news, there are nine slots still available for the upcoming Effective Writing for FNS course. Dates for the course are as follows: Wednesday, July 20; Friday, July 22; Tuesday, July 26; Thursday, July 28; and Tuesday, August 2. For more information on either course, contact Tom Zrubek on FTS 756-3320.

Personnel News

Jennifer Joyner is Personnel Division's new Receptionist. Please call 756-3379 or visit Room 803 for assistance.

Washington Area News

Women's Week: During the week of May 23, the National Office Federal Women's Program Committee implemented its plans for Women's Week. The keynote speaker -- Audrey Rowe, D.C. Commissioner on Social Services -- was introduced by Administrator



Administrator Bob Leard introduces the keynote speaker at the opening ceremony of Women's Week.

Robert Leard and entertained at a reception hosted by the Committee. The week's theme was "Women on the Move." Activities included a panel of women in nontraditional careers, a workshop by a career counselor, a discussion on juggling career and family, and a film concerning contributions of women to U.S. history.



Audrey Rowe, D.C. Commissioner on Social Services, answers questions after her keynote speech.



At the Women's Week reception are Joe Bennett, Deputy Administrator for Management; Alberta Frost, Director of Civil Rights and EEO Division; Trish Warner, Federal Women's Program Manager; and Audrey Rowe.



The Federal Women's Program Committee: Back row - Nancy Theodore, Gwen Baldwin, Karen Coffman, Joyce Ashton, Daphne Brown, Trish Warner, Emma Clinkscales, Geraldine Broadway. Front - Emma Ward, Millie Kriegel, Olivia Gunter, Paula Mullins.

Photos by Paul Rowen

Regional News

FNS Programs Aid Earthquake Victims



FNS programs were called on to provide relief for victims of the May 5 earthquake in Coalinga, California. The 6.5 shaker leveled most of the downtown area and destroyed one-fourth of the private residences in the city of about 7,000. Most of the heavily damaged downtown area is fenced off and access is restricted to emergency and security personnel.

Food stamps were one of several assistance programs affected families applied for at the single Federal Emergency Management Agency disaster assistance center in the town's Elk lodge. By the conclusion of the 2½-week application period, some 4,500 people (1,400 households) had received \$286,000 worth of food stamps.



Truckloads of food arrived at Sunset Elementary School -- the single mass feeding site. The Red Cross and National Guard served more than 100,000 meals in 3 weeks. Only a few cases of USDA commodities were used because an abundance of food was donated by individuals and companies like Carl's Jr. (seen unloading).

Photos by Tino Serrano

Preliminary Summary of Food Assistance Program Results

Following are preliminary estimates of participation in the Federal-State food assistance programs for the month of April with comparisons to the previous month and to the same month of last year.

	<u>Apr. 1982</u>	<u>Mar. 1983</u>	<u>Apr. 1983</u>
<u>Food Stamp Program: 1/</u>			
People participating this month (mil.)	20.6	22.6	22.2
Value of bonus coupons (mil.)	\$ 802.3	\$ 983.6	\$ 956.7
Average bonus per person	\$ 39.04	\$ 43.60	\$ 43.05
<u>Food Distribution to Needy Families:</u>			
Number of projects in operation	83	75	75
People participating this month (thous.)	96.1	90.5	91.5
<u>Special Supplemental Food Program (WIC):</u>			
People participating this month (mil.)	2.2	2.4	2.4
Federal food costs (mil.)	\$ 64.3	\$ 72.9	\$ 73.3
<u>Commodity Supplemental Food Program:</u>			
People participating this month (thous.)	126.5	143.9	144.0
Federal cost (mil.)	\$ 1.7	\$ 2.0	\$ 2.0
<u>Child Care Food Program:</u>			
Number of outlets taking part	NA	77,500	NA
Children participating (thous.)	NA	973	NA
Federal cost (mil.)	\$ 27.6	\$ 31.0	\$ 30.0
<u>National School Lunch Program:</u>			
Number of schools taking part 2/	91,162	90,481	90,481
Children participating this month (mil.)	22.9	23.2	23.3
Children reached with free or reduced-price lunches this month (mil.)	11.5	12.1	12.0
Percentage of lunches served free	42.7	45.2	44.6
Percentage of lunches served at reduced price	7.1	6.8	6.8
<u>School Breakfast Program:</u>			
Number of schools taking part 2/	34,352	32,887	32,887
Children participating this month (mil.)	3.4	3.5	3.4
Percentage of breakfasts served free or at reduced price	88.9	89.6	90.0

1/ Puerto Rico has been excluded from all months.

2/ Data collected annually (month of October).

NA = Not Available. Data reported quarterly.

Food and Nutrition Service
Management Information Division
Data as of: June 17, 1983

Job Opportunities

FNS is seeking to fill the following vacant positions. To be considered for one of them, submit an up-to-date SF-171, Personal Qualifications Statement, and current performance appraisal to the appropriate personnel office. If you're interested in a Headquarters position, apply to the Employment Branch, Personnel Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alexan-

dria, Virginia 22302. Apply directly to Headquarters office for all GS-14 and 15 positions. For Regional positions, apply directly to the Regional Office. For details on the requirements for any of the positions listed below, consult the official vacancy announcement. These are posted on designated bulletin boards or you can get copies from the appropriate Regional or Headquarters personnel office.

Friday Letter Vacancy Listing by Vacancy Number

Job Title	Series	Grade	Closing Date	Vacancy Number	Organizational Unit
Investigator (Reannounced)	1810	5/7	07/18/83	83-22	PAD/COMP. BR.
Supervisory Program Analyst	345	14	07/26/83	83-66	MID

PAD/COMP. BR. - Program Accountability Division/ Compliance Branch/ Alexandria, Virginia
MID - Management Information Division